



Dialogue



The newsletter of the Human Resources Division, January 2013

We ARE Making Progress...

By: Ron Marlow, Assistant Secretary, Office of Access & Opportunity

“We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.” Since these words were written, the history of America is replete with efforts to make this statement of ideal a statement of principle and of fact. Although we as a society have made tremendous progress; we have tremendous progress to achieve.

We are committed to creating an executive branch that is free from discrimination and fulfilling the promise of equal opportunity. Indeed, the Governor directed these efforts when he signed Executive Order 478¹, which established non-discrimination, equal opportunity and diversity as principles of the executive branch. The Executive Order directs us to operationalize these principles. Our commitment to operationalize these principles is, perhaps, best exhibited in our efforts to secure the promises of equality in employment and equal access to buildings and services to individuals with a disability. Although we have much to do, it would be wise for us to take stock of what we have accomplished.



The Commonwealth: Working to be a Model Employer

¹ Footnote: Executive Order 478 was signed by Governor Patrick on January 30, 2007; it has since been superseded by Executive Order 526.

Model Employer Effort

As recipients of this newsletter know, the Patrick/Murray Administration launched the Commonwealth as a Model Employer of Persons with a Disability in June of 2009. This effort, whose primary aims are to achieve equality in employment, started out less ambitiously.

In 2008, Paul Dietl of the Human Resources Division (HRD) and Myra Berloff of the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD), in response to concerns expressed by executive agencies that data collection efforts relative to employees with a disability were flawed and failed to account accurately for employees with a disability, convened an internal working group to investigate methods to better collect and report on such data. Consistent with the efforts of HRD-MOD to track and report data better, the Office of Access and Opportunity directed the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity to publish and report on our Administration hiring goals with respect to persons with a disability.

While the HRD-MOD effort was proceeding, two tangential efforts were being defined. Each of these additional efforts would impact the HRD-MOD effort. First, under the leadership of Secretaries JudyAnn Bigby and Suzanne Bump, Assistant Secretary Jean McGuire and Undersecretary Jennifer James, the Executive Offices of Health and Human Service and Labor and Workforce Development were engaged with regional employment collaborative consisting of private sector employers, who were committed to new approaches to dramatically improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

Second, the Governor directed the Office of Access and Opportunity to work with the HRD-MOD working group to develop a strategic approach that would outline and demonstrate the executive branch's commitment to improving the employment environment and outcomes for persons with a disability. This direction and the resulting strategic approach formed the basis of the Model Employer effort.

Since the launch of the Model Employer effort, and under the continued, steady guidance of Sandra Borders, an inter-agency working group has overseen implementation of the Model Employer effort.



Reasonable Accommodations Capital Reserve Account

In an effort to ensure that the provision of reasonable accommodations are not denied to employees who require them (and, by law, are entitled to them) due to an executive agency's inability to fund the accommodations, the Office of Access and Opportunity, with the support of former ANF Secretary Jay Gonzalez, worked to develop and implement the Reasonable Accommodations Capital Reserve Account or RACRA, a central pool supported by capital funding. ANF has supported the RACRA via an initial allocation of \$100,000 in FY2009 and an annual allocation of \$150,000 in successive fiscal years.

RACRA was created to assist executive branch agencies in responding reasonably and responsibly to employee requests for reasonable accommodations in the workplace. RACRA does not take the place of an executive agency's responsibility to be responsive to an employee's request for a reasonable accommodation; instead, RACRA functions as a back-up tool in instances where executive branch agencies would be unable to fund the accommodation. The RACRA is co-administered by the Massachusetts Office on Disability and the Office of Access and Opportunity.

RACRA is another tool to support (a) our commitment to implement the principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunity and (b) our Model Employer effort. Please see chart below, or you may click on the link for the full RACRA Report:

[Model Employer Initiative RACRA Report](#)



Dialogue - Page 4

Table of RACRA Awards for FY 2012

Figure 1. The chart shows RACRA Funds were utilized in FY2012.

Agency	Secretariat	Individuals Served	Request	Approved
<i>Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity</i>	<i>ANF</i>	<i>6,000</i>	<i>\$669.99</i>	<i>\$669.99</i>
<i>Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission</i>	<i>HHS</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>\$7,200.00</i>	<i>\$7,200.00</i>
<i>Massachusetts Office on Disability</i>	<i>ANF</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>\$50,000.00</i>	<i>\$50,000.00</i>
<i>Bureau of State Office Buildings</i>	<i>ANF</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>\$32,204.00</i>	<i>\$32,204.00</i>
Total		6,018	\$90,073.99	\$90,073.99



The Commonwealth: Working to be a Model Employer

Dialogue - Page 5

ANF Administrative Bulletin #19

A workplace environment that supports equal employment opportunities is an important element in meeting our obligations to persons with a disability; but, our efforts in this important area must be complimented by efforts to promote equal access to our facilities and the programs that we administer. It was in recognition of this concomitant responsibility that a broader effort was launched.

In 2010, the Office of Access and Opportunity convened a working group for the purpose of: (1) discussing accessibility efforts to comply with the ADA, (2) creating a common understanding regarding such requirements, and, (3) developing a policy and programmatic framework to ensure compliance, especially in the context of capital budgeting. This working group consisted of representatives from the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance, the Massachusetts Office on Disability, the Civil Rights Division of the Attorney General's Office and a representative of the Disability Policy Consortium.

In March 2011, the Office of Access and Opportunity issued its report and recommendations. The two most important recommendations contained in the report were the following:

- The promulgation of an ANF Administrative Bulletin to:
 - Reinforce the objective of equal access for people with disabilities to state programs, services and activities,
 - Define an organizational framework to achieve this objective,
 - Outline the processes to achieve this objective, and
 - Define the roles and responsibilities of state agencies and personnel to achieve the objective.
- Pursuant to the ANF Administrative Bulletin, the creation of a Universal Access Committee to:
 - Define policy objectives and direction consistent with the state objective of the Administrative Bulletin;
 - Oversee and coordinate implementation of the actions necessary to achieve the objectives of the Administrative Bulletin, including the development of agency strategic self-assessments and transition plans;
 - Share best practices across the executive branch and among agencies that receive capital funding; and,
 - Provide a means for the provision of technical assistance to state agencies.



Dialogue - Page 6

Since approval of ANF Administrative Bulletin #19, our efforts have been focused on securing resources to support accessibility efforts (ANF has allocated \$5 million in fiscal years 2013-2015 and \$8 million in fiscal years 2016-2017 to support such efforts), working with DCAMM and MOD to define strategic approaches forward. We are well-positioned to make extraordinary progress against our objectives in this and succeeding fiscal years.

To learn more, you may click on this link to read Administration and Finance Bulletin #19: [ANF Bulletin 19](#)

Information Technology Accessibility Roadmap

Consistent with and building off our efforts under ANF Administrative Bulletin #19, in the fall of 2011, the Office of Access and Opportunity convened a working group consisting of representatives (Maureen Chew, Linda Hamel and Sarah Bourne) of the Information Technology Division and the Massachusetts Office on Disability to develop a roadmap to achieve enhanced accessibility in information technology deployment and utilization.

The development of the Roadmap must be considered in a broader, Administration context in which we are working to enhance the coordination of efforts to achieve accessibility across all of state government. ANF Administrative Bulletin #19 outlined an important policy and programmatic framework to eliminate barriers to accessing public buildings, programs and services. As we move forward with defining and implementing the way forward on these fronts, it is equally important that we move forward on the front of information technology accessibility. The Information Technology Roadmap is designed to advance our collective responsibility to achieve accessibility in the acquisition, deployment and utilization of information technology.

Conclusion:

Policies and programs are important. They establish frameworks for advancing our agenda of inclusion. Yet, they cannot and do not take the place of individuals whose behaviors help create an organizational culture that facilitates attainment and maintenance of access and opportunity for all. Across the executive branch, there are many individuals – I have mentioned but a few – who have embraced our common purpose, especially as this purpose relates to ensuring equality to persons with a disability, to promote non-discrimination and equal opportunity. As we move forward in our efforts, we cannot anticipate, let alone answer, every question that will likely arise. Nor can we expect that there will not be new challenges as we advance. However, the test cannot nor should not be can we answer every question or anticipate every challenge today. The test is how we commit ourselves to moving forward to ensure that all individuals are afforded equal access and equal opportunity.



This is your opportunity...

"Did you know?"



The International Symbol of Access (ISA) Wheelchair Symbol, is maintained as an international standard, ISO 7001, and a copyrighted image of the International Commission on Technology and Accessibility (ICTA), a committee of Rehabilitation International.[1] It was designed by Susanne Koefoed in 1968.

Our colleagues at the University of Massachusetts Medical School is conducting focus groups to better understand the role that health care services and health care providers can play in helping individuals with disabilities to work.

In the focus groups participants will be asked about employment-related healthcare services that people with disabilities use or need and about their ideas on the types of health services that should be covered by insurance so that people with disabilities can work.

If you are interested in learning more about the focus group and/or volunteering, you can click on the link here or contact Laura Sefton by calling (508) 856-4213 or emailing Laura.Sefton@umassmed.edu.

Please leave your name, email address and/or phone number so that we may contact you. Thank you!

Please note these focus groups are being conducted independently by the University of Massachusetts Medical School and your participation is voluntary.



Are We Making Progress?

Figure 1: The Percentage of Self-identified Executive Branch Employees from March 2007 to December 2012.

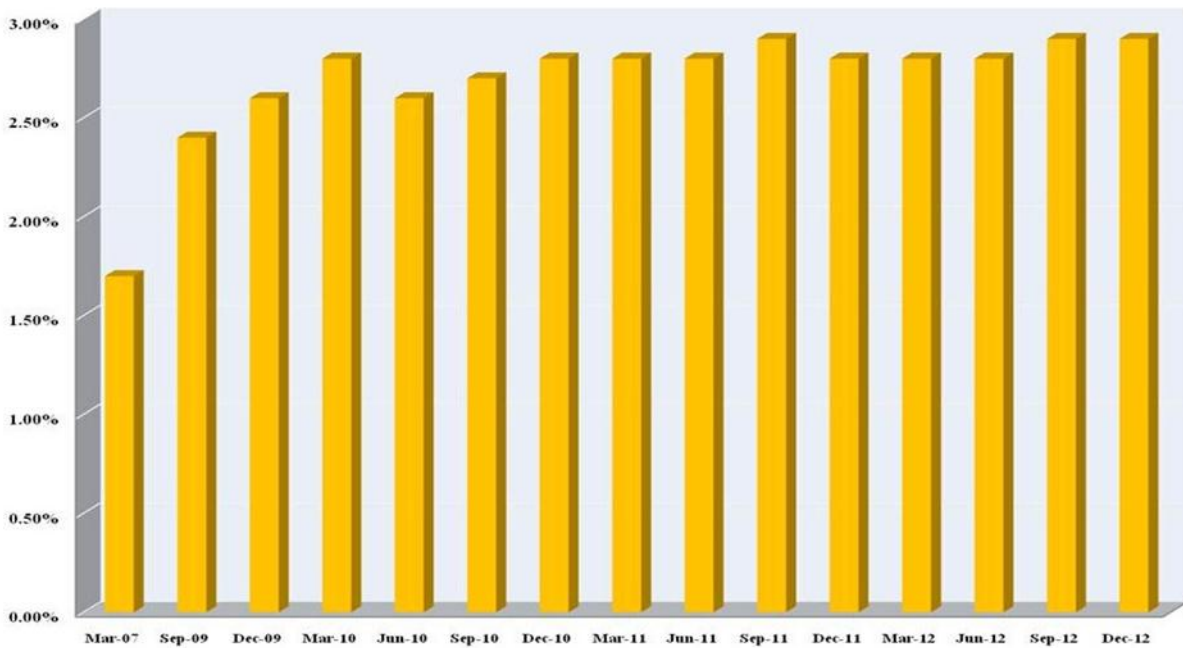


Figure 2: The Percentage of Self-identified Executive Branch Management Employees from March 2007 to December 2012

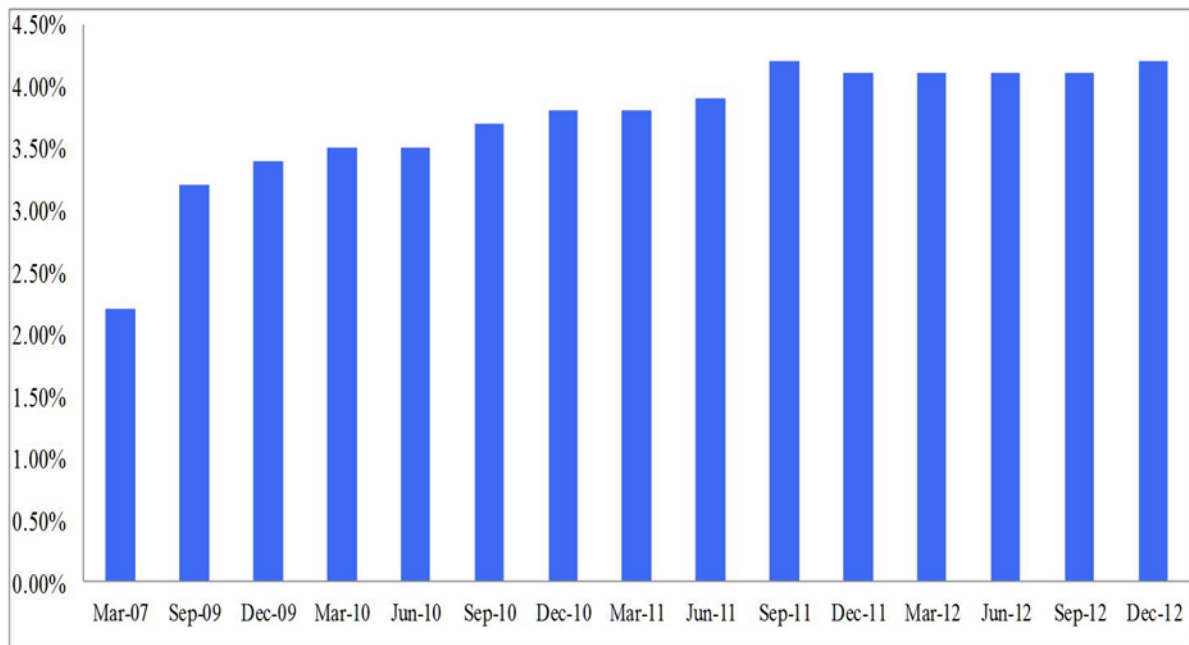
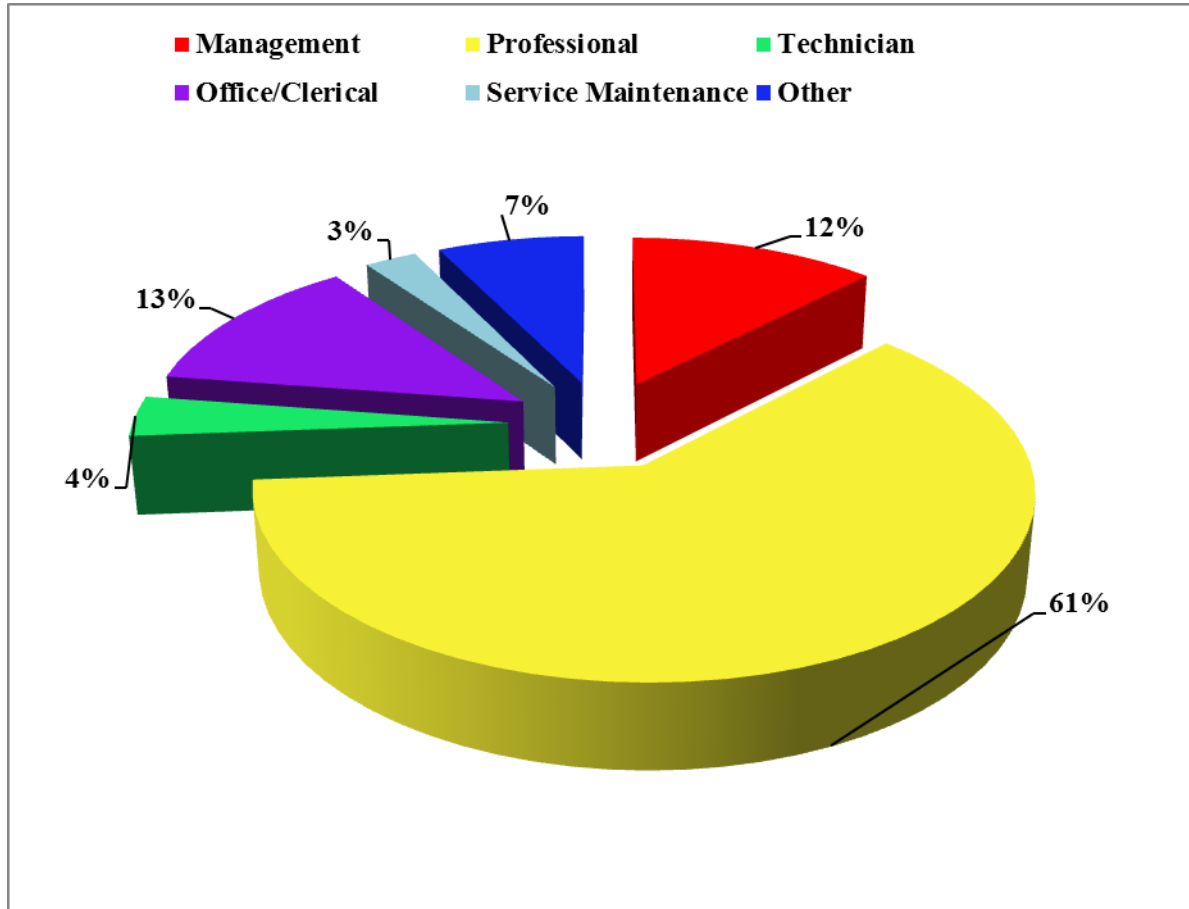


Figure 3: The Percentage of Self-identified Executive Branch Managers and Employees by EEO-4 Job Category as of close of Quarter 2, FY13



“Commitment is what transforms a promise into reality.”

- Abraham Lincoln